

IN THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Amended) A method for supporting multiple Virtual Private Networks in an ~~MPOA/NHRP~~ a Multi-Protocol Over ATM/Next Hop Resolution Protocol (MPOA/NHRP) communication system, the method comprising:

establishing a connection in the communication system; and
using in-band signaling to designate the connection for a number of Virtual Private Networks.

Claim 2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the act of using in-band signaling to designate the connection for a number of Virtual Private Networks comprises:

using in-band signaling to add a Virtual Private Network to the connection.

Claim 3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the act of using in-band signaling to designate the connection for a number of Virtual Private Networks comprises:

using in-band signaling to remove a Virtual Private Network from the connection.

Claim 4-48. (Canceled)

Claim 49. (Original) A method for supporting multiple Virtual Private Networks using the Next Hop Resolution Protocol (NHRP), the method comprising:

determining a Virtual Private Network for each NHRP message; and
encoding a Virtual Private Network identifier in each NHRP message.

Claim 50. (Original) The method of claim 49, wherein the act of encoding the Virtual Private Network identifier in each NHRP message comprises including the Virtual Private Network identifier in a header within each packet.

Claim 51. (Amended) The method of claim 50, wherein the header is a ~~LLC/SNAP~~ Logical Link Control/SubNetwork Attachment Point (LLC/SNAP) header.

Claim 52. (Canceled)